

## AMMODONUS FOSSOR ON STATEN ISLAND.

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NEW BRIGHTON, STATEN ISLAND, N. Y.

This beetle was described by Dr. Leconte in 1847 in *Fragmenta Entomologica*, *Journal Academy Natural Sciences*, Philadelphia, 2d Series, 1, p. 92, and the localities given are at Trenton and at Bath, Long Island, in white sand.

Dr. George H. Horn in his *Revision of the Tenebrionidæ of America North of Mexico*, *Trans. Am. Philos. Soc.*, Vol. XIV, 1871, p. 359, has this to say of *Ammodonus*: "The generic characters are of such a nature as renders any detailed description of the unique species unnecessary. The margin of the body is fringed with short hairs, the surface black, but densely clothed with ash-colored scales. On the elytra the vestiture is less dense, and three series of rounded spots are visible on each elytron, in which the scales are paler and more densely placed. The under surface and legs are paler and the scales sparsely scattered. Length .18-.22 inch. Not common in collections. It has been found in considerable numbers burrowing in the sand in the neighborhood of Trenton, and at Bath, Long Island."

In *The Beetles of Southern Arizona*, *Bull. Lab. Nat. History*, State University of Iowa, June, 1898, p. 310, *Ammodonus fossor* is recorded from Tucson, "about street lights," by H. F. Wickham. In the *New Jersey List* (1910) it is reported from "West Bergen, rare (Bischoff)." In the U. S. National Museum Collection are specimens from Goliad, Texas, November 17, and Oracle, Arizona, July 23, and in Mr. Charles W. Leng's collection are examples from Cypress Mills, Texas, 1886 (Schaupp); Tucson, Arizona (Wickham), and Medora, Kansas, May 29, 1899 (W. Knaus). Maryland is given as a locality on a specimen in the collection of the Academy of Nat. Sciences of Philadelphia.

Though the above mentioned specimens are thus recorded in collections and literature, it is probable that the western ones are *Ammodonus granosus* Fall, *Canadian Entomologist*, January, 1912,

described from three examples collected by Gustave Beyer in the Rincon Mountains, Southern Arizona.

To the localities for the true *fossor* of the Eastern States may now be added Staten Island, N. Y., on the up-beach at Ward's Point, Tottenville. On June 5, 1914, the writer was seated on the sand by the trunk of an ailanthus tree that is destined to be killed by the encroaching sea, when a small turtle-shaped beetle, about five millimeters in length, was seen to move an inch or two in the sand, which it closely resembled in color. If I kept quiet it would move about frequently, but only an inch or two at a time. I soon found that there were others about and that they sometimes buried themselves in the sand; occasionally upon carefully examining a small area, I would see one suddenly appear on the surface from its subterranean wanderings. They were really quite common and a considerable number were soon collected.

On September 18, 1914, Mr. Charles W. Leng visited the locality with me and we looked about on the surface for *Ammodonus*. There were none, but by digging four or five inches below the surface, among the roots of the large crab grass, *Syntherisma sanguinale* L., we collected a number, though of course they could not be found as commonly by this method as in early summer when they came to the surface in the sun. On May 14, 1915, several were found about a quarter of a mile to the eastward along the beach, and on July 9 and 10, 1915, the original locality was visited by Mr. Ernest Shoemaker, Mr. Lewis B. Woodruff and the writer, when the beetles were again collected in considerable numbers. Four pairs were found in copulation, and the male was observed to be smaller and narrower than the female; also the males seemed to be generally darker, that is to have some of the scales worn off of their elytra.